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ABSTRACT

The necessity for training highly competent individuals to assume educational leadership positions will be critical in the near future, since a sizeable percentage of school administrators and professors of educational administration will retire over the next decade. The programs preparing current administrators are not equipped to meet the demands of 21st century schools. This paper describes an initial attempt to reform principal preparation programs using a five-step process. Administrator preparation requirements outlined by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration in 1987 include five strands: (1) the study of administration; (2) the study of educational administration's technical core; (3) application of research findings and methods to problems; (4) supervised practice; and (5) demonstration of competence. The American Association of School Administrators has developed guidelines featuring the most critical goals, competencies, and delivery components for inclusion in administrator preparation programs. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has also identified 12 important skill areas. In 1987, the Kentucky State Department of Education mandated that educational administration programs in the state provide knowledge in 11 areas and directed reforms initiated at Western Kentucky University. The Department of Educational Leadership received a Danforth Foundation grant to further exemplary and innovative administrator preparation programs. The program's five stages are program admission, formal course work, testing, the oppportunity for supervised practice and demonstration of competence, and mentoring. Included is a list of 17 references. (MLH)

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A FIVE-PHASE MODEL

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A paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the **Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration** on November 12-14, 1989 in Columbia, SC.

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CHANGING PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS:

A FIVE-PHASE MODEL

The necessity for training highly competent individuals to assume educational leadership positions will be particularly critical in the immediate future (Patterson, Purkey, and Parker, 1986). The National Association of Elementary School Principals anticipates retirement of 50 percent of their current membership by 1992 (Finn, 1986). All school levels, elementary, middle, and secondary will feel this turnover of practicing educational administrators. Additionally, some researchers speculate that over 50 percent of practicing superintendents and professors of educational administration will also leave the profession during the next decade. If these projections become reality, new training programs for educational administrators are required immediately. Consequently, the programs that prepared current educational administrators are not equipped to meet the demands of 21st century schools. Personnel in institutions of higher education must design innovative, imaginative, and realistic programs to prepare future educational administrators. This paper describes an initial attempt at reforming preparation programs for principals.

RATIONALE FOR CHANGE

Typical school administration programs have conveyed the impression there should be a rationality, continuity, and orderliness in educational administration (Green, 1987). However, current literature and actual practice suggest that what really exists in the principalship is a significant amount of ambiguity, chaos, and diversity (Morris, Crowson, Porter-Gehrie, & Hurwitz, 1984; Peterson, 1978). The stereotyped view of the principal as an administrative manager will not be sufficient to meet both the current and future demands for instructional leadership (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982).

The growing knowledge base regarding effective schools consistently details the key role played by administrators in such schools (Bossert, 1985; Corcoran, 1985; Schlechty, 1985; Firestone & Wilson, 1983). Research on educational reform and school improvement corroborates the interdependence of skilled administrators and student achievement (Anderson, 1985).

Current educational reforms demand that principal responsibilites be directed toward increased quality (Deal & Celotti, 1980). Consequently, the challenge to state education agencies, higher education institutions, and local school districts is to develop competent methods to select, prepare and reward effective school administrators. Personnel in higher education institutions must design and

implement preparation programs which delineate the essential knowledge and skills necessary for effective leadership in the principalship. The preparation program developed by personnel Western Kentucky University (WKU) and described herein exceeds the requirements for both a knowledge and a skill base.

NATIONAL REFORM

Administrator preparation requirements outlined by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration [NCEEA] (1987) include five strands or program areas: the study of administration, the study of the technical core of educational administration and the acquisition of vital administrative skills, the application of research findings and methods to problems, supervised practice, and demonstration of competence. (p 19)

By comparison, guidelines developed by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) feature the most critical goals, competencies, and delivery components for inclusion in administrator preparation programs. These three aspects are subdivided into seven "theoretical foundations," or areas, in which any prospective administrator should receive training (AASA, 1982). The suggestions reflect AASA's conviction that the objective for academic preparation should be skill acquisition.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) identified 12 skills essential for success in the principalship. The 12 areas are: problem analysis, judgement, organizational ability, decisiveness, leadership, sensitivity, stress tolerance, oral communication, written communication, range of interest, personal motivation, and educational values (NASSP, 1982).

Other national reports and several educational researchers have speculated on the skills or attributes needed by future principals. Typically, researchers, such as Yukl (1982), identified the functions performed by future principals as the following: (1) to develop goals, policies and directions; (2) to organize the school and design programs to accomplish the goals; (3) to monitor progress, solve problems, and maintain order; (4) to procure, manage, and allocate resources; (5) to create a climate for personal and professional growth and development; and, (6) to represent the school to the district office and the outside community.

STATE REFORM

The Kentucky State Department of Education (KSDE, 1987) mandated that educational administration programs in Kentucky provide knowledge and experience in eleven areas. The areas are: the study of (1) research, (2) curriculum, (3) administrative theory, (4) techniques of instruction and

supervision, (5) personnel administration, (6) uses of instructional technology, (7) educational and psychological testing, (8) the legal aspects of education, (9) the role of the principal, (10) business management and accounting procedures, and, (11) community relations.

LOCAL REFORM

The preceding national and state efforts gave direction to the reform initiated by the Department of Educational Leadership at WKU. Once the broad parameters were outlined, a faculty committee developed a modern program that would encompass some of the tenets of national reform and yet accommodate state requirements. Additionally, the Department of Educational Leadership recently received a Danforth Foundation grant to assist in future development of exemplary and innovative preparation programs for school administrators.

THE FIVE-PHASE PREPARATION PROGRAM

The former certification program of school administrators at WKU had been in place for almost 20 years without significant modification or revision. WKU personnel clearly had the opportunity for innovation to meet the diverse and changing needs for tomorrow's prospective school administrators. The impetus for change came from several sources: the prevalent educational reform atmosphere, the

inadequacies in the current preparation program as perceived by the WKU faculty, the KSDE, the Danforth Foundation, and problems addressed by the Kentucky legislature.

Three years ago the Department of Educational Leadership faculty identified the problems associated with current preparation programs, and developed a plan to deal with the anticipated changes. An advisory committee comprised of practicing school administrators contributed perceptions of the current and planned preparation program for effective school administrators. In addition, a faculty committee met regularly to study, discuss, and assimilate the recommendations from the advisory committee, synthesize information from the literature, and become acquainted with current state statutes.

As a result of the study and work of this committee, the current preparation program complies with or exceeds all the newly-mandated state requirements for educational administrator certification, including the recommendations articulated by the national professional educational administrator associations, and utilizes recommendations advanced by practicing educational administrators. By utilizing this program, consisting of five phases, personnel at WKU will make a consequential contribution to improving the quality of public education in Kentucky by preparing effective leaders for administrative positions. The program is graphically illustrated by Figure One.

PHASE ONE

The new principal preparation program at WKU requires the prospective administrator to decide on the desired level of certification. Three levels of preparation are available: early elementary (grades K-4), middle school (grades 5-8), and secondary (grades 9-12). Additionally, students may select from the following administrative specializations: supervisor of instruction, director of pupil personnel, school business manager, or school superintendent. Requirements and prerequisites are different for each level and each specialization.

Prior to acceptance in the principals' preparation program at WKU, a candidate must meet minimum criteria for admission. First, the candidate must have three years of successful teaching experience appropriate to the grade level of the certification desired. This requirement prevents teachers certified in secondary education from obtaining an elementary principal's endorsement, or vice versa, without training in the appropriate field. Candidates are also required to possess a master's degree and a standard teaching certificate. The standard certificate indicates that the student has completed the master's degree, or equivalent, with at least 12 semester hours in a subject matter specialization outside the field of education. Essentially, educational administration is a post-master's program. The

KSDE does not grant incremental salary increases for an Educational Specialist degree, but rather refers to the completion of 60 semester hours beyond the bachelor's degree as a Rank I certification. However, a student may pursue an Educational Specialist degree if desired. The department now encourages most who wish to be administrators to enroll in the Educational Specialist degree program rather than the traditional certification program.

Candidates must also present minimum scores on one of three national examinations: the Graduate Record Exam, the National Teacher's Exam, or, the Miller Analogy Test. In addition, three letters of reference are required prior to admission to the certification program.

PHASE TWO

Course requirements for principal certification are divided into Level I (18 semester hours) and Level II (12 semester hours). Level I courses include: (1) a course in the general foundations of administration; (2) a course in the use and application of educational technology to educational administration; (3) a course in the legal aspects of education, especially as they apply to the school principal; (4) a course in instructional leadership, which includes monitoring, supervising, and evaluating teachers and the skills to recognize effective teaching; and (5) a course

in the role of the principal appropriate to the certification area.

Level II courses include: (1) a course in school business management appropriate to the principal's certification level (This is not a repetition of a general finance course which typically examines finance from the central office/superintendent's perspective; but rather, an intense course in managing individual school-level funds), (2) a course in school and community relations, (3) a course in the administration of school personnel, and, (4) a seminar in administration.

The seminar in educational administration is critical to the program's success. First-year principals and those students completing Level II certification compose the seminar and meet with other practicing administrators and a variety of university, local school, and state department personnel. Discussion topics reflect upon the application of research to the existing school environment. Additionally, seminar participants share information regarding their entry into the profession and the skill acquisition essential for achievement and success in the principalship. Instructors also utilize simulations and case studies to provide practice in dealing with administrative situations. Both instructors and fellow participants provide feedback to participants in the seminar.

PHASE THREE

An additional requirement for principal certification in Kentucky involves formal testing. After completion of formal courses, candidates for the principalship must successfully complete four examinations: (1) the test of general knowledge, and (2) the communication skills subsections of the core battery of the National Teacher's Exam (NTE), (3) the administration and supervision specialty section of the NTE, and (4) the Kentucky Specialty Test of Instructional and Administrative Practices. All tests have minimum proficiency scores and candidates have multiple testing opportunities.

PHASE FOUR

An intensive internship must be completed by aspiring principal before formal approval for principal certification. The applicant must have completed the 18 semester hours of academic course work in Level I before employment as an intern principal. During the internship the candidate will receive assistance from and be monitored by three practicing professionals: another practicing principal, a central office administrator, and a professor of educational administration.

The supervised principal's internship program permits the candidate an opportunity for supervised practice regarding skill acquisition and the occasion to demonstrate

competence of acquired skills. The committee members visit with the candidate both collectively and individually to provide assistance and support. Committee members receive training for their work with interns and reimbursement for their travel expenses. Successful completion of the internship grants the candidate certification for four additional years during which time the candidate must complete the remaining 12 hours of course work. If the candidate is unsuccessful in the internship, the candidate has one more opportunity for employment, provided a school system is willing to offer employment.

PHASE FIVE

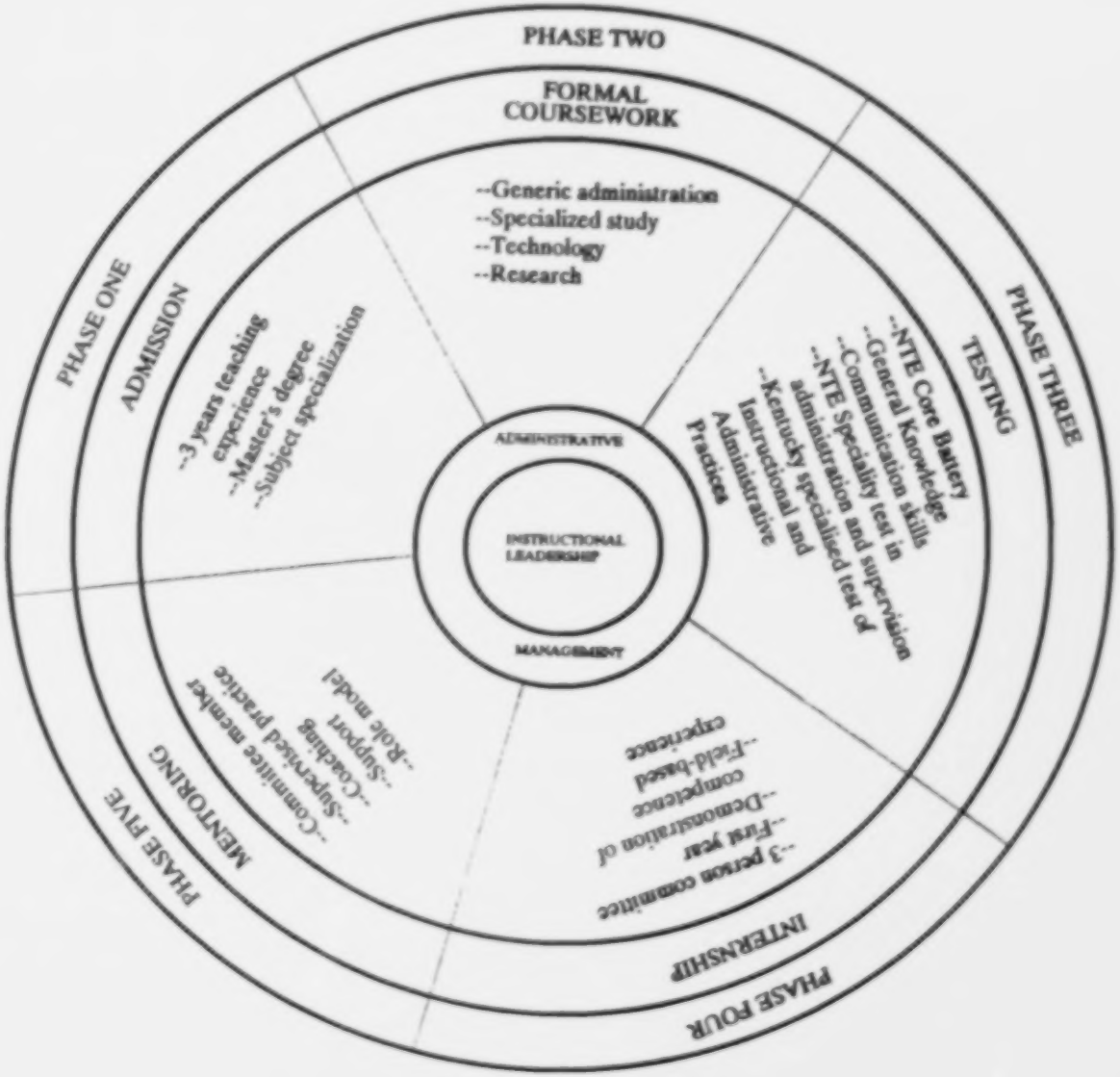
The internship provides the aspiring principal the probability of success through guided, supervised practice and latitude for additional skill development (Marley, 1988). However, the internship does not acquit the candidate of the principal's responsibility, because the intern is legally the principal or assistant principal of the school with all duties and responsibilities. However, this final phase includes the opportunity for the potential administrator to develop mentoring relationships with those educators who assisted during the internship. Intern principals have stated that the real secret to the success of the program was the occasion to develop friendships and ties to the internship committee.

In the past, new principals were often left to their own devices with little assistance from other practitioners who assumed that the formal course work prepared the new principal for life on the job, when in reality there was a need for mentoring and helping relationships. The current preparation program forces mentoring relationships and encourages further assistance beyond the formal requirements of the program. Mentors function as role models, coaches, and support systems for the intern principal. Participants are encouraged to form mentoring relations to extend after the completion of the formal internship training.

CONCLUSION

The national reform agenda outlined program areas critical to the preparation of future administrators. The Department of Educational Leadership at Western Kentucky University developed a program for potential administrators which incorporates the areas specified by UCEA, AASA, NASSP and other reform reports. In addition, the program anticipates the needs of future principals by including components recommended by practicing professionals. The primary ingredients of the program are included in five phases: program admission, formal course work, testing, the opportunity for supervised practice and demonstration of competence, and mentoring.

MODEL FOR PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM



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